

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 27, 2009

The Honorable Ray LaHood
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary LaHood,

We write to you to express our strong support for New England passenger rail projects that collectively form a bold vision for the transportation future of our region.

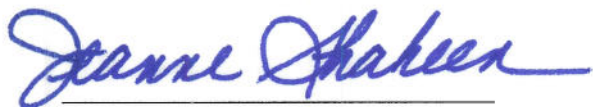
In the 21st century, the New England high-speed passenger rail network will connect every major city in the region with airports, smaller communities and rural areas. The rail system will link our states with the Mid-Atlantic Region and internationally with Montreal by integrating a fully developed Northern New England High-Speed Rail Corridor with the planned Empire Corridor and the Northeast Corridor. Rail investment will promote economic development and livable communities across New England, while reducing highway and airway congestion and promoting energy efficiency.

The New England states are uniquely positioned to make use of the unprecedented \$8 billion investment in passenger rail now available through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. Our well-developed rail infrastructure includes three of the busiest train stations in the country (Boston, Providence and New Haven) and all six states are served by Amtrak, which operates the *Downeaster*, the *Vermont* and other trains along the Northeast Corridor. Continuing a longstanding partnership, the New England states have drafted a *Vision for the New England High-Speed and Intercity Rail Network* which details the region's priority projects for improving passenger rail service. We are pleased to submit this document for your review.

The collaborative *Vision* recognizes that the next generation New England rail network will connect new communities to the system, promote smart growth and traverse the borders of states and nations. Upgrades to existing lines and development of new connections will give our 14 million residents, and millions of visitors, access to one of the fastest, most reliable and service-focused rail systems in the world. We applaud the transportation officials that have pledged to collectively implement this plan and create a model for the rest of the nation.

We urge the Department of Transportation and the Federal Railroad Administration to prioritize funding for New England passenger rail projects and look forward to working with you to continue this critical investment in our nation's transportation and economic future.

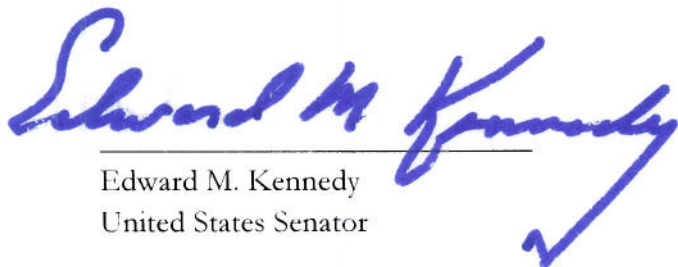
Sincerely,



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



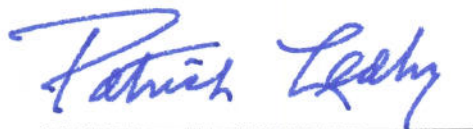
Olympia J. Snowe
United States Senator



Edward M. Kennedy
United States Senator



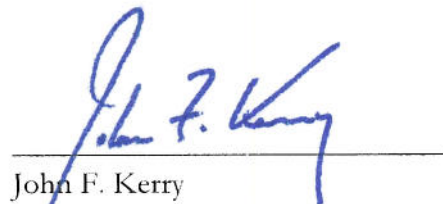
Susan M. Collins
United States Senator



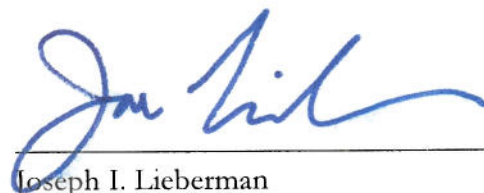
Patrick J. Leahy
United States Senator



Christopher J. Dodd
United States Senator



John F. Kerry
United States Senator



Joseph I. Lieberman
United States Senator



Jack Reed
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator

CC: Joseph C. Szabo, Administrator, Federal Railroad Administration
Joseph H. Boardman, Amtrak President and CEO
Karen Rae, Deputy Administrator, Federal Railroad Administration'